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SPEECH TRAINING IN THE SCHOOL

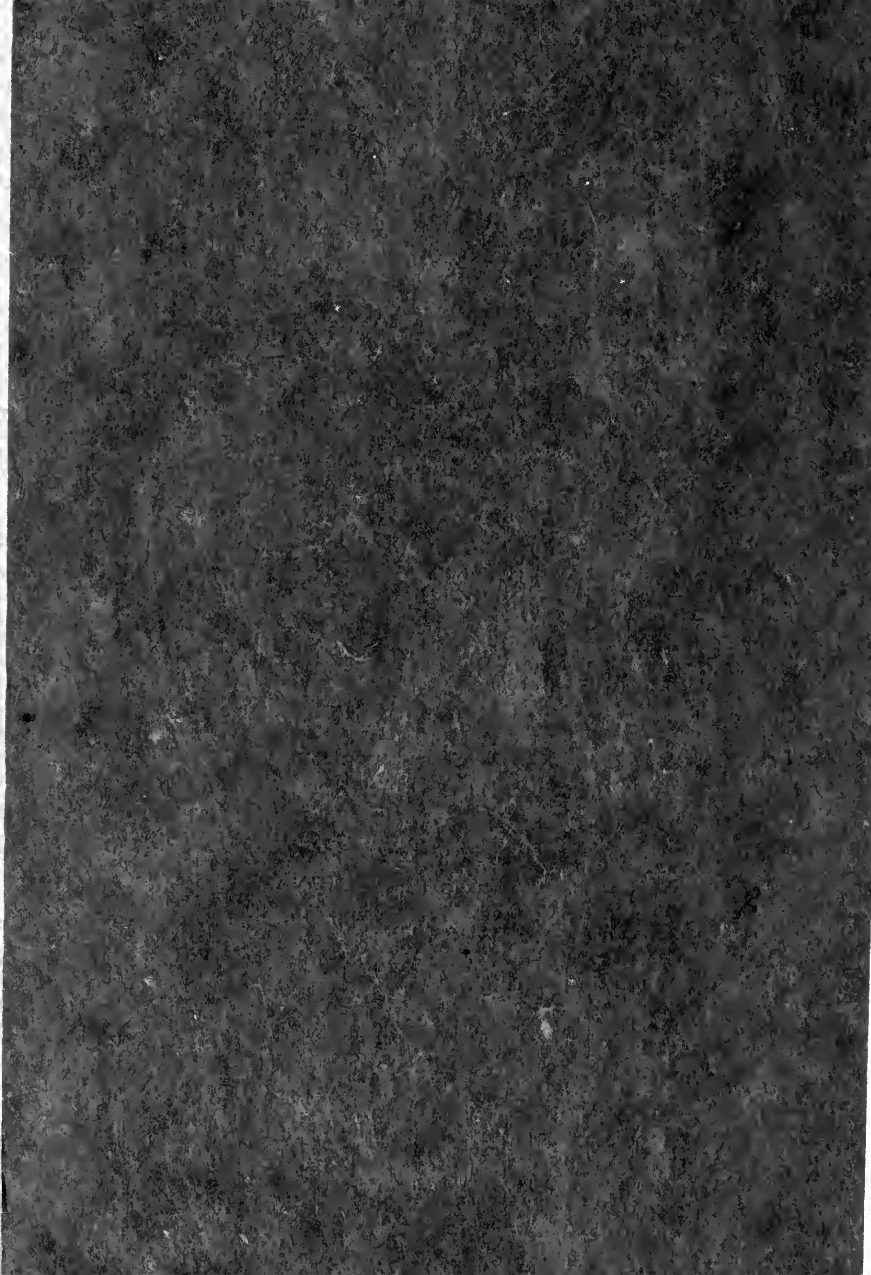
By MARJORIE GULLAN

*Head of the Polytechnic School
of Speech Training*



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SPEECH TRAINING IN THE SCHOOL

By MARJORIE GULLAN

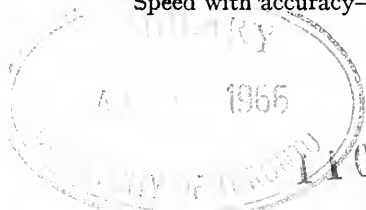
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SPEECH TRAINING IN THE SCHOOL

INTRODUCTORY

I SHALL endeavour in this book to indicate the various points to which we must pay attention in our Speech Game, taking each in the order which I consider most helpful. I shall, moreover, hope to present lessons, which, by the introduction of slight changes here and there, may be applied to pupils of various ages.

* * *

The main faults which we observe in the speech of adults and children in this country are :

1. Poor quality and quantity of tone.
2. Mis-shapen and badly pronounced vowels.
3. Thick, muffled utterance.
4. Lack of muscular activity of lips, tongue and jaw.

Now, if we look into the matter, we shall realise that to remedy the first fault we must achieve good breathing capacity and control, and the power to use our resonators correctly. To cure the second fault, it is obvious that the teacher must be able both to teach and to illustrate by her own speech the right shaping and the correct pronunciation of English vowels and diphthongs. For the third, we must practise and teach such exercises as will help our pupils to open their mouths, dropping the jaw

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and keeping the teeth well apart. For the fourth, we must work hard at the consonants and the "lipping" exercise.

It should be borne in mind, when presenting these lessons, that they must be given in the spirit of a game which all play together. Though the teacher knows perfectly well what she is aiming at, and has also knowledge by means of which she can achieve that aim, the pupils should look upon their speech training as a delightful and absorbing game, which is never associated with drudgery or unwilling effort. In the school curriculum at present we have only a few minutes here and there in the various lessons to devote to this most necessary subject, and therefore we must obtain the utmost concentration when practising if we are to achieve good results. This will best be done if the pupils look forward to their speech game and lend their eager co-operation.

LESSON 1

Breathing

WHAT must we work for at all stages, when giving breathing lessons? First, that an ample supply of breath is ensured, and second, that that supply is well controlled in the output and constantly renewed without its renewal being audible to the listeners.

A very simple explanation of the "chest box" should precede any exercises for the older boys and girls, but, generally speaking, it is quite sufficient if we can get them to realise, by experimenting upon themselves, that the ribs comprising the upper chest are fixed both to backbone and breastbone, while those below are only fixed to each other in front and to the backbone behind. They will quickly see that this makes the lower (or floating) ribs capable of much more expansion than the upper ribs, and they can now be told that the lungs are larger below than above, and so can take in more air in the space within the lower ribs. Let them test this as they swing the floating ribs in and out during the first breathing exercise.

Correct Position

Before they can practise this breathing exercise, however, we must show them the importance of correct position. If the upper chest is not well held up (without being in the least rigid) there will never be any control of the outgoing breath. We have used in the past what

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I think is an unfortunate term, when we have asked our pupils to "raise" the upper chest. The suggestion thus offered makes them at once seek to do this by lifting up and drawing back the shoulder blades, a movement which immediately stiffens all the muscles round the throat. We shall do much better if we speak of bringing the upper chest forward, and this position may be achieved by placing the fingers of the right hand firmly upon the end of the breastbone and bringing that part of the breastbone slightly forward and upward against the pressure of the hand. In bad stooping positions the breastbone takes, very roughly, this curve) ; whereas in a good position it should take the opposite (.

Sitting Attitude

The simplest way to accomplish correct position for breathing is to teach the pupils to sit well up in their seats upon the end of the backbone, and to set the shoulders (without raising or stiffening them) squarely against the backs of their seats, making, so to speak, a straight-backed chair of themselves.

If the seats in the classroom are of such a nature as to make this impossible, we must get our pupils to stand with shoulder blades flattened against the school wall, knees back, backs of calves and hips just touching the wall, head well up but chin drawn in.

Now we must impress upon them all the necessity for maintaining this forward position of the end of the breastbone when breathing out, because if it falls in, the upper chest will collapse and the breath we have taken will all rush out and hinder our speaking instead of helping it. (The children must be shown how to test this for themselves, and the testing will cause much amusement.) If,

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however, we can maintain this forward position of the upper chest, we can afford to use plenty of breath for speaking, swinging the floating ribs comfortably in and out as we do so, because there is now steady control set in from above.

Muscular Activity

The bringing forward of the upper chest must always be achieved by muscular activity such as I have described, quite independent of the breathing. This must invariably be done before we begin breathing exercises and must be so maintained during inspiration and expiration. The setting back of the knees and hips is also absolutely essential. The muscles of the lower abdomen need strengthening in nearly every case, and the slight retraction thus given to them acts as a tonic to the whole system. The very act of setting back the hips and knees will in itself do much to give the upper chest its correct position. The importance of correct position for breathing cannot be over-estimated.

It is not necessary at the beginning to practise anything but the swing of the ribs, though we can let our pupils realise, by asking them to place the right hand against the waist in front and the left against the waist at the side, that there is movement both in front and at the sides. Later we shall be more conscious of this forward movement when, for instance, we practise our plosive consonants ; but at present it would be much too distracting to do more than notice it in passing. What we must concentrate upon now is the swing of the floating ribs, and if the pupils are thoroughly absorbed in testing this swinging movement, and at the same time keeping the upper chest in position, there will be little danger of upper chest breathing.

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The testing is done by setting the backs of the hands firmly against the sides, just at the waist line, then resisting the impact of the hands by swinging the ribs out against them, while we breathe in. Now send the ribs swinging inward, helping this movement by pressure of the hands against them, while we breathe out. Breathe in through the nose with lips closed ; breathe out through the mouth, shaping the sound " ah," the teacher counting a rhythmic easy " 1, 2, 3, 4 " to the taking in, and the same to the sending out of the breath. For the first two or three times encourage the pupils to take in and send out the breath quite audibly, even noisily, so that they may realise what is taking place. Throughout the whole of their speech work they ought to make themselves aware constantly of what they are doing, both by sense of hearing and sense of touch. As soon as this awareness is established, perfectly quiet, even breathing must be the rule. Guard against the tendency to take in too much breath during these exercises, as this always results in the driving of some of it into the upper chest, thus choking the free passage for breath. In this first lesson, we must work for healthy, vigorous intake and output of breath by means of the muscles which control the floating ribs, keeping the upper chest perfectly maintained in position without the slightest stiffening. The muscles all round the throat must be absolutely easy and relaxed, the chin kept well in, the shoulders well held but never pressed backward or pushed upward.

Further Exercise

From this first exercise, we can pass to one where we ask our pupils to breathe in through the nose with the lips and teeth slightly apart, then out in the usual way,

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shaping but not speaking the sound "ah." This is for the purpose of quiet intake of breath at the beginning of a passage or phrase, as it would look very peculiar if we firmly closed the lips every time we wanted to breathe deeply before speaking or reading a phrase. The position just indicated is something akin to that taken by the mouth in smiling, and the breath is now being taken as a matter of fact partly through the nose and partly through the mouth. The "smile" suggestion is an excellent one for our pupils, because such a suggestion does away with all tendency to rigidity of the throat muscles, and will help greatly, later on, in the achieving of melodious, easy tone.

Rhythmic Breathing

Now make one more addition to this little breathing exercise. Ask the pupils to breathe in to your rhythmic "1, 2, 3, 4," steadily and quite silently through the nose, with the lips and teeth slightly apart as before. Then ask them to hold the breath quietly, keeping the ribs steady against the back of the hands, again to the rhythmic easy "1, 2, 3, 4," subsequently breathing out in the usual way once again to "1, 2, 3, 4." Pause, counting a last "1, 2, 3, 4," as a rest before beginning the exercise over again. This is for practice in strengthening control of the muscles which swing the ribs out and in.

Renewing the Breath Supply

Show by illustrating the matter to your pupils that the breathing in through the nose with lips closed may be used at the beginning of a passage of reading, but that we cannot stop at every pause to close the lips again before taking a fresh breath thereafter, so that we have to practise silent, easy breathing with the lips and teeth

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apart, for the constant renewal of breath which we must take at every pause. Help them to realise that it is not necessary to take in an over-large breath supply—an ample one we need, but only such as can be taken with ease and comfort. What we must learn to do is to keep putting in whatever we take out in the way of breath supply, so that we always have plenty with which to finish a phrase, and some over. This knowledge will be used in the subsequent lesson upon the vowels.

LESSON 2

Vowels I

LET us now combine our vowel practice with what we know of breathing, and we shall soon see that we cannot sustain or repeat the longer vowels and diphthongs without a good breath supply. Before proceeding to the vowel lesson, let us talk generally to the class upon the shaping of vowel sounds. Let us remind our pupils that if we want to conduct a volume of water to our house we use a pipe. Ask them to imagine what the results would be if there were no pipes and no taps for the conducting of water. They realise at once that the stream of liquid would be dissipated and rendered useless to everyone. Again, show them what happens if a trumpet, instead of retaining its shape (rounded, with the edges turned outward) is smashed quite flat. That is the sad fate, we know, which often befalls a little brother's toy-trumpet when a careless foot treads it down ! The sound that comes is either distorted, or (if the shape be quite flat) there is no sound at all. They will soon gather our meaning, and realise that to convey a volume of sound adequately and usefully, we must have a conductor, and the conductor should take the shape, roughly, of a trumpet—rounded, with the edges set outward. If we can at this point imitate to

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them the average speech we have around us, where the lips are hardly parted and the teeth almost closed, they will be very much amused, and will see what it is they have to avoid. Now to show them the necessity for projecting sound by giving it shape, let us bring the hands up to either side of the mouth, as the coalman instinctively does when he calls "Coal," and help them to see how well sound carries if we put it right forward in front of the teeth and keep it there by means of breath-capacity, and the shape and gripping power of the conductor—the funnel or trumpet—call it what we will. .

Long Simple Sounds

Now we are ready for vowel practice. Let us first take what we may call the long simple sounds.

Two things we must impress upon the pupils at this point. First, that the tip of the tongue must always be touching some part of the inner side of the lower teeth when speaking vowels and diphthongs ; and second, that in the very narrowest of the sounds there should always be room enough between the teeth to pass the little finger to and fro, without any danger of biting it.

The long simple sounds, taking them as they travel from back of tongue to front of tongue position, are :

oo ; aw ; ah ; er ; ee.

oo. This sound is very badly spoken as a rule, and has to be given most careful practice. The mouth in making it, should take on the shape of a pout, the lips being softly rounded and protruded, the opening between the teeth being about a quarter of an inch wide. The back of the tongue is raised high toward the back of the palate and the tip of the tongue is in the position which

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it assumes when we make a low whistle—down behind the very bottom of the lower teeth-ridge. The tip of tongue position is perhaps the most important of all in this vowel sound. It is a great help to use for practice some imitative sounds such as “coo,” or “moo,” or “boo.” As soon as the shaping begins to be established, combine the sound with a breathing exercise as follows :

Breathe in through the nose, swinging the ribs outwards against the pressure of the hands, as in Lesson 1. Now breathe out while speaking :

oo—woo—woo—woo—woo.

The sounds must be well-sustained and perfectly definite, the last sound being as steady as the first, every sound directed well in front of the teeth to the arch of the upper lip.

No Rigidity

The pupils must use ample breath for making the tone, and for carrying the voice well forward into the funnel of the lips, but *must* keep the upper chest position well maintained without the least rigidity. (Position is of the first importance in the building of good tone.) Later, when the control of breath is helped by power in the muscles of lips and tongue, we shall be able to speak seven sounds, then nine sounds, then eleven sounds, instead of five, learning thus the preliminary work for the sustaining of the phrase, and the clear finish of the last word and syllable.

Now take some words containing the sound of “oo,” such as “moon,” “cool,” “gloom,” showing the class how beautiful the words are which contain this sound. My teacher-students then use sentences to follow such

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words, carefully chosen for vowel practice, and graded according to the needs of the students. We see at this point the need for the teacher to practise until she herself can produce such sounds beautifully and accurately. We cannot show beauty in sound which we are unable to demonstrate by means of our own speaking voice, and to achieve this needs careful training.

Practice of Sentences

Follow the practice of simple words like those given above, with a simple phrase such as :

“ The cool and gloomy pool ” (“ where the doves coo ”), adding later the phrase in brackets, as the pupils acquire more power of sustaining. Remember that we cannot keep the sound well forward in the mouth unless there is good breathing capacity behind it.

aw. This is often called by the little children in my classes the “ landing window ” sound, because it is so long and narrow. The corners of the lips must be brought well forward, as far forward indeed as they will come, the edges of the lips set lightly outwards, and the teeth about three-quarters of an inch apart. The back of the tongue is raised midway towards the back of the palate, and the tip is pressed against the lower teeth ridge, a little higher than in “ oo.” This is a very important sound, and must be well practised, because it is largely by means of it that we get the rounding on many of the sounds, which are so flattened and retracted in ordinary English speech. If our pupils can learn to bring the corners of the lips well together in practising this sound, and can keep them in that position when repeating the sound, they will have gone some way towards counter-acting the fatal flattening tendency which accounts for so

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much ugly tone. Imitative sounds such as "caw" are again helpful here. We may then use "y" before the sound to establish it, thus :

Aw—yaw—yaw—yaw—yaw,

practising first five, then seven, nine, and eleven, as before. Follow this with words containing the sound, such as "yawn" and "yawl," and then with a sentence containing as many "aw" sounds as possible—a sentence which is well within the breathing capacity of the pupils to sustain, i.e., The tall and stalwart forces (stalking in the dawn).

ah. This sound must be most carefully practised, because if our pupils are allowed to flatten it they will never achieve the correct pronunciation of the sound which forms the first element of two of the diphthongs. They should shape "aw" silently, then speak "ah," keeping the corners of the lips drawn forward as in "aw," but widening the arch of the upper lip. Use "w" for the exercise, thus :

Ah—wah—wah—wah—wah,

followed by "waft," "shaft," "path."

Sentence : Did you see father pass (the dark path).

er. This sound, whether stressed or unstressed, is called the neutral vowel. The tongue lies practically at rest in the mouth, and the vowel seems to be made in the midway position. There is a very marked tendency to flatten, and great care must be taken to give it shape and forward production, because of its neutral position. Bring the corners well forward, keep the teeth about a quarter of an inch apart, and send the sound forward into the arch of the upper lip. Use "w" with this sound, thus : Er—wer—wer—wer—wer.

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Words : Worth, world, mirth, earth, turf.

Sentence : Worth all the work (in the world).

ee. This sound has a wider shape than any of the preceding, and consequently a narrower opening. We can just get the tip of the forefinger between the teeth when making it and no more. The commonest fault among Cockney children is to sound the diphthong "ay" in place of it. But this can be checked by getting our pupils to see what it is that we, their teachers, are doing. When we speak "ee," we are keeping the tip of the tongue against the lower teeth, pressing the front of the tongue hard up against the front of the hard palate and raising the sides of the tongue to within the sides of the upper teeth, whereas in "ay" we are just raising the front of the tongue about two-thirds of the way. Also we are in "ay" gliding from one position to another, whereas in "ee" we take only one position. (This our boys and girls will quite understand when they come to practise diphthongs.)

Exercise : ee, wee, wee, wee, wee, etc.

Words : Weep, weed, weald.

Sentence : The leaves of the trees (leap in the breeze).

The children will delight in making up sentences for themselves, to illustrate the various sounds, and will be much more interested in speaking sentences they themselves have made than in any stereotyped lesson set for them.

Projection of Sound

It is a great help, once the pupils have acquired the isolated sound, and have then established it by practising the little exercise, to teach them to shape and project the sentence by the device of putting the hands to the

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sides of the mouth, as if calling along a passage. They must remember that they must never shout while doing so, but only bring the voice well forward ; shaping the lips meanwhile just like a trumpet or megaphone. They must be careful to keep the thumbs away from the lower jaw, otherwise movement of that part will be seriously impeded.

In the next lesson we shall study the short simple vowel sounds, sometimes called the lax or relaxed sounds.

LESSON 3

Vowels II

Short (or Relaxed) Vowel Sounds

A (lack), E (let), Ĭ (lick), ŌŌ (look), Ŏ (lock), Ŭ (luck). The first three of these sounds are best taught in connection with each other as they are all front vowels—i.e., vowels made with the front of the tongue. (All vowels should be *sounded* in the front of the mouth, but some are made with the back of the tongue raised and some with the front.) Throughout these notes I shall mark the short sounds thus ˘ to distinguish them from long, and where contrasting short with long, may sometimes use the well-known sign for the latter, i.e., –.

A (lack) is made at the very front of the tongue. We can realise the position if we think of a cachou or a three-penny piece placed on the extreme front. The tip of the tongue is as usual kept against the inner side of the lower teeth, only now it is held there so high, that if we look in the mirror we shall see that the rest of the front of the tongue bulges slightly forward.

Exercise : Repeat *ă.ă.ă.ă.ă.* (as in “lack”), laying the tip of the forefinger on the extreme front of the tongue, and lifting it off between each sound, so that the pupils locate the position both by look and touch.

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Words : Catch, pad, lamp.

Sentence : A glad batch of lads (catching crabs).

N.B.—Second part of phrases in brackets to be added for exercise in sustaining of breath.

Ē (let). This sound is, so to speak, just above the short “*ă*” (lack) in position, and the tongue is slightly raised, brought inward from the sides, the raised sides just touching the upper teeth. (If the forefinger, to the length of the first joint, is laid on the extreme front of the tongue, “*ă*” will come just under the first joint, and “*ě*” just under the tip of the finger.)

Exercise : *ě.ě.ě.ě.ě.* (as in “let”). In this exercise, lay the first joint of the forefinger on the extreme front of the tongue—first practise the “*ă*,” then feel the tongue rise under the forefinger, while the sound “*ě*” is said, and observe the little hump so made. The tip of the tongue must be kept most carefully against the inner edge of the lower teeth, as described, and the corners of the lips brought forward.

Words : Red, bet, well.

Sentence : A red thread well stretched (to the ends of the tent).

Ī (as in “lick”). This is the sound where the tongue takes the position just below that of “*ee*,” where it will be remembered we press the front of the tongue firmly against the hard palate, and raise the sides to within the upper teeth. The pupils should practise this sound first by lowering it a little from “*ee*,” and then raising it from the short “*ě*,” as it is, roughly speaking, between the two. When raising it from the short “*ă*” and “*ě*,” the children should observe, as always, what is happening, by using a small mirror. They will find that when they come to “*ī*” (lick), the front and sides

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of the tongue are being raised higher than in “*ɛ*”—the tip being set firmly against the inner edge of the lower teeth. Let them, as in “*ɔ*” and “*ɛ*,” raise and lower between each sound, so as to locate it.

Words : Pitch, sill, wind.

Sentence : Lift the slim twigs (on the windy hills).

N.B.—It must be remembered that if these three sounds are flattened in shape they will be very ugly and quite incorrect. The corners of the lips are, of course, not brought so far forward as in such sounds as “*oo*” “*oh*,” and “*aw*,” but they must come forward in advance of the position which they hold when the mouth is at rest. If we let our pupils practise with the hands set gently at the sides of the mouth to make a funnel, and teach them that besides getting the right position of the tongue for each vowel, the actual sound should in every case be directed to the arch of the upper lip, we shall get really good results, both in tone and pronunciation.

Back (Relaxed) Vowels

OO (as in “look”). This sound is very similar in tongue position and lip shaping to “*oo*.” In tongue position it is as “*ɪ*” (lick) is to “*ee*,” being slightly lowered and slackened from the “*oo*” position, where the back of the tongue is held firmly pressed against the back of the palate. In lip shaping, it will be found that in “*oo*” (look) the upper lip is lifted a little, making the arch a little wider than in “*oo*,” and giving less forward push than in the latter. Where the children find it difficult to make this sound, as is the case in Scotland, a helpful exercise is that of pressing the little finger against the lower lip to prevent its forward movement, and leaving the upper lip with its widened arch to be responsible

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for the sound. We also help them by suggesting to them that the sound is very like the "ugh" of disgust with a good deal of the breath taken out of it.

Exercise : oo, oo, oo, oo, oo (look).

Words : Good, look, push.

Sentence : Books in the running brooks (and good in everything).

Ö (as in lock). There is just a slight raising, but except for that there is practically the same position for the upper lip as that of "oo," but there is a distinct drop now of the lower jaw, and a slight relaxing of the corners of the lips. In tongue position it will be found, if our pupils put the forefinger in to test, that the back of the tongue moves downward from the palate from "oo" (cool) to "oo" (look), and from "oo" (look) to "ö" (lock).

Exercise : ö, ö, ö, ö, ö (lock).

Words : Pond, stock, blot.

Sentence : A hot spot in the grass plot (where the stocks rot).

Ů (as in luck). A slight widening of the lips from the short "ö" position and a slight relaxing of the corners of the lips. In the tongue position it is akin to "ah," slightly raised and brought forward. The Cockney says a flattened "ah" for "ü" ("bahns" for "buns"). To avoid this he must always be taught to over-round the short "ü" and keep it firmly forward. The result is something like "bons" and counteracts the flattening tendency. It is a good thing to practise "oo," "ö," and "ü" (if the children have this tendency) with the corners of the lips brought forward as in *aw*. "Ů" is rather like a very much rounded and unstressed "ah."

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Words : Brush, crust, suck.

Sentence : Hush! There is rustle and rush (among the brushwood).

Diphthongs

AY (mate), I (mite), O (mote), U (mute), OI (coil), OW (cowl).

Ay. This sound is made by gliding from the short “*ĕ*” to the short “*ɪ*,” and must be most carefully practised. The general tendency is to flatten the tongue and the corners of the lips, in the first element “*ĕ*,” while the Cockney frankly treats the first element as “*ă*” with a nasal intonation added. Therefore great care must be taken to keep the corners of the lips in the right position, and the tongue raised as we did in the practice of the short “*ĕ*.” The pupils should be helped to realise the two sounds we want them to make in such words as “*mate*,” by seeing them written for the moment thus : “*meh-it*.” First speak the elements separately, then give them the necessary glide.

If our pupils know French phonetics, they should, in practising “*ay*,” approximate as nearly as possible to the sound of “*é*” in *l’été*, for the first element. In the case of the first sound in the diphthong “*o*,” those who know French should aim at approximating to the sound “*o*” in *gros*.

Exercise : Ay—yay—yay—yay—yay.

Words : Maintain, waylay, waste-places.

Sentence : The spray of the waves came from the bay (where the whales lay).

I. The actual standard English sound seems to be made up of the French “*ah*” (as in *gras*), and the short simple “*ɪ*.” We may find however, that if we are to

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counteract such pronunciation as “*smahl*” for “*smile*,” we must produce the English “*ah*” sound in the arch of the upper lip as described, and exaggerate the second element, which has been left out, by writing the word “*smah-eel*.” When the pupils pronounce “*smile*” frankly as “*smoile*” (*smaw-il*) the writer finds that to give the first element as a yawning “*ah*” is a very great help.

O. The standard English sound here seems to be practically “*ěr-oo*,” but that is not enough to counteract the “*ě-oo*” of the Cockney, or the “*oa*” of the Yorkshire child. The first element must be said with the shape of “*aw*”—corners of lips drawn together as far as they will come, and then pushed forward quickly for the short “*oo*.” (Do not let the first element be sounded at all until the corners are brought strongly forward, and do not let the corners slip back at the second element, as they are apt to do. Practise the sounds definitely and vigorously, never allowing slack corners of the lips.)*

Exercise : Oh—woh—woh—woh—woh.

Words : Loadstone, stone-cold, old-gold.

Sentence : Go to the old road (where the moat is overgrown).

U. The two elements are as follows : *ĩ-oo*. This is the only diphthong where the stress is on the second element. There should be no trouble with this sound if the *oo* has been carefully practised. Incidentally, we can get a valuable little exercise from this sound for the lip muscles. Practise going rapidly from *ee* to *oo* in this fashion : Ee-oo, ee-oo, ee-oo, ee-oo, ee-oo, ee-oo. Then reverse, thus : Oo-ee, oo-ee, oo-ee, oo-ee, oo-ee, oo-ee, passing from the widest position of the lips to the narrowest, and *vice-versâ*.

* See suggestion on previous page regarding “o.”

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Exercise : U-yu-yu-yu-yu.

Words : Dew, use, fuel.

Sentence : The new suits to be of use must be reduced.

Oi, or *Oy*. The glide here is from “*aw*” to “*ɪ*” (lick). In some parts of Scotland they do not seem to possess the sound of *aw*. They say “*boll*” for “*bawl*,” and “*vice*” for “*voice*.” In the latter case we must let our pupils see it spelt once or twice as “*vaw-is*” and “*noise*” as “*naw-iz*,” and get them to realise the element they have left out by putting extra weight upon it when practising. See that the corners of the lips are brought strongly together in “*aw*” before they are allowed to relax in “*ɪ*” (lick).

Exercise : Oi-yoi-yoi-yoi-yoi.

Words : Soil, boys, loiter.

Sentence : The noise of many waters (and the voice of thunder).

Ou, or *Ow*. One of the most difficult sounds we have, to teach. The two component parts are “*ah*” and “*ō*” but we get every variation from the Scottish “*ū-ōō*” to the Cockney “*ē-ōō*.” We must teach the first element as “*ah*,” made with the shape of “*aw*” as described in a former article. Do not allow this first element, “*ah*,” to be sounded until after the corners of the lips are drawn together as far as they will come—then quickly press them forward for the short “*ōō*.”

Exercise : Ow-wow-wow-wow-wow.

This exercise must be done vigorously, holding the shape of the lips firmly, rather as though imitating a dog’s bark.

Words : Down, ground, browse.

Sentence : The howl of the wolves as they prowled around (the brown house).

LESSON 4

Nasal and Mouth-Chamber Resonance

BEFORE we pass from vowel to consonant practice, we shall be well advised to give our boys and girls some exercises for resonance. The average voice is lamentably lacking in this respect. It must be remembered that we can achieve no beauty of speech unless we can make full use of our resonance cavities in mouth, neck and nose. Largely because of the prevalence of adenoids, nasal catarrh or blockage of some kind or another between nose and throat, good nasal resonance is very rare. We cannot do anything better for the health of the class than to combine its breathing exercises with practice in resonance.

Take the letters " m," " n," and " ng," and use them as the basis for the following exercises.

Ask the class to take a vigorous breath, as they have learned to do in previous lessons, and then to hum " m " on an easy middle note, sustaining the note so long as the sound can be kept perfectly steady. This provides great interest, as it is possible gradually to increase the power of sustaining. It is best for the teacher to start by counting a slow five going on to seven and nine.

It will generally be found that the humming is muffled because, owing to bad habits of breathing and speaking, the

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nasal cavities have been very little used. We must get the children to bring the sound strongly down the nostrils and to fill the nasal cavities with sound. In order to do this, teach them to make a little bridge of the first two fingers of each hand by joining the tips together and placing them lightly under the nostrils. They must then be taught in their humming exercise to drive the breath strongly down upon the fingers, so that the hot stream is felt from either nostril. They will need deep, vigorous breathing for this exercise and this is all to the good. If *five* is too long a count at first, take *three*. The great point is that each child should feel a strong impact of breath upon the little bridge under the nostrils and be able to give power to the sound.

Humming

When they have practised in this way for some time, let them use another device. Let them hum the "m" into the hand, shaped like a shell and held in front of the face. This again provides a tangible object at which to aim, and brings the sound consciously to the front.

Repeat both these exercises with "n" and "ng," making sure that the children realise that "m" is a lip-nasal, i.e., contact is made by the lips while the sound is driven up the nasal passage, and the "n" is a nasalised "d," the contact being made by the tip of the tongue against the teeth ridge, whilst "ng" is a nasalised "g," contact being made by the back of the tongue against the back of the palate.

The children must be taught that unless the contact is well and firmly made and held, the result is sure to be poor, as in the case of imperfect contact the difference between the various nasals is blurred. This is a most

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difficult thing to teach unless the teacher has herself been taught and is sure of being able to demonstrate correctly to her pupils at every point.

Now take the short vowels and combine them with the "m," "n," and "ng," in some such way as this :

- i. " *Man, men, min, mon, mun.*"
- ii. " *Nam, nem, nim, nom, num.*"
- iii. " *Mang, meng, ming, mong, mung.*"
- iv. " *Nang, neng, ning, nong, nung.*"

Let the children sing each of these groups in turn, on an easy middle note, giving full nasal resonance to each consonant. If the five sounds of each group are found to be too many, give two or three at a time, taking an ample supply of fresh breath for each group. It need hardly be said that these exercises should be done, whenever possible, in the school playground or with the windows wide open.

Practice in "Nasal Resonance"

I add a few examples for practice, with single words, phrases and sentences. In all these the nasals must be held on and practically sung so that the fullest nasal resonance may be obtained.

Single Words

Moaning, mining, meaning, mooning.

Naming, rhyming, gleaming, fuming.

Longing, stinging, clanging.

Hyphenated (Imitative) Words

Ding-Dong!

Ting-Tong-Ting

Ping-Pong!

Bing-Bang-Bong

Kling-Klang!

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Phrases

- "The moving moon."
- "The blinding mist."
- "Monks of Rome from their home."
- "The jingling and the tinkling of the bells."
- "And gleaming and steaming and streaming."
- "And shining and lining and twining."

Sentences

- "I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone."
- "He sends a ring and a broken coin
And bids you mind the Banks of Boyne."
- "His lambs outnumber a noon's roses."
- "The blinding mist came down and hid the land,
And never home came she!"
- "The gong was ringing and the men were singing."
- "Down! down! down!
Down to the depths of the Sea."

N.B.—The attention of our pupils should be called to the beauty of sound resulting from the combination of powerful plosives with the ringing nasals. The effect when well spoken should be that of a gongstick upon a gong or a striker upon a bell.

Other Resonators

As was said before in a previous lesson, it is absolutely necessary, if we are to achieve clear carrying tone, that we should be able to make full use of all our resonators. We have spoken of nasal resonance. Let us now direct our attention to the resonators in the neck and mouth; that of the pharynx which is the back wall of the mouth chamber, and that of the hard palate, the inner sides of the cheeks, and the bony framework of the teeth.

We can get very little resonance from these parts,

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however, if the soft palate, with the uvula at its end, is allowed to drop down towards the back of the tongue, blocking the entrance into the mouth chamber from the throat. There is another cause of blockage of this important passage. The tip of the tongue in careless speech is often so retracted and the tongue itself is so unruly in consequence, that it rises up in the mouth chamber and blocks the passage which should be clear for sound. We must then give our pupils a little exercise, by means of which they shall be able to raise the soft palate vigorously and at the same time control the tongue.

Let the pupils take in a light breath through the nose, as if smelling something, then breathe out, shaping a big "ah" quite lightly and quietly, keeping the tongue flat in the mouth as they do so, with the tip of the tongue firmly held against the inner edge of the lower teeth. Tiny mirrors *must* be given to each pupil for this exercise, because everyone must see for himself as he speaks this "ah" the uvula rise up high above the back of the tongue, with the arches seen on either side of it. If we think of a yawn while we are saying this "ah" we shall attain the required result. Remember that nothing short of a vigorous lifting of the uvula high above the back of the tongue will serve. It is quite useless to be content with the mere appearance of the uvula just above the back of the tongue. That will never induce vigorous action of the soft palate, which is what we all need. Be careful when practising to keep the chin well in, as otherwise the throat muscles will tend to stiffen.

Raising of the Soft Palate

When the class has become familiar with the look and "feel" of the yawning position necessary for the raising of

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the soft palate, then let it practise upon some simple sentences such as the following.

Why did you | *wake baby*? (Second part of sentence said three times.)

Where is my | *green screen*?

What is that | *white light*?

Go to the | *old road*!

Go to the | *gloomy pool*!

Where is my | *new suit*?

Oh, what a | *tall stalk*!

What do the | *waves say*?

What was that | *boisterous noise*?

What gave that | *loud howl*?

The method of practising the above sentences is as follows.

Take breath through nose with lips parted, then speak the sentence, introducing the first two knuckles of the hand between the teeth and well into the mouth, keeping tongue flat and tip of tongue against lower teeth and thinking a yawn *before each of the words in italics*. Put the knuckles in, in this way, and immediately after withdrawing them say the words in question, while the jaws are in the position of being set apart as far as possible. Repeat the words in italics three times in this way, then insert the knuckles, *counting three silently*, and having breathed sufficiently for the whole sentence, speak it in entirety the fourth time. This exercise will really accustom our pupils to opening their teeth and dropping their jaws, and will go far to remedying that thick muffled utterance so common in our country and so irritating to hear.

This exercise can be carried further by using it in connection with a prose passage, inserting the knuckles and

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counting three silently at the beginning of every phrase. We must remember, however, that it must never be practised perfunctorily. We must get the jaws as far apart as they will go, we must keep the tongue flat and the tip of the tongue against the inner edge of the lower teeth, and we must *think* a yawn while the knuckles are sent well into the mouth chamber, and every now and then we must go back to our practice with the mirrors to see that the soft palate is being well raised.

Nasal intonation is due to the fact that the soft palate is not vigorously functioning, and is not closing the passage to the nose, in the making of the various sounds which should have mouth-chamber resonance. It is therefore just such exercises as the above which should be practised for the correction of this fault.

LESSON 5

Consonants I

THERE is one other little exercise which we must learn before we take up our consonant practice, and this we call the "lipping" exercise. Its purpose is (1) to induce vigorous intake and output of breath; (2) to get the voice well forward; (3) to induce muscular activity of lips, tip of tongue and jaw.

The "Lipping" Exercise

Invite the class to imagine that they are in a room where someone is asleep and where they may not speak aloud in case of waking the sleeper. There is, however, someone else at the extreme end of the room to whom they must give a message, and give it without any mistake as to meaning; so they are to summon up all their force of breath, direct it to the very front of their lips, and manage to convey, practically by means of consonants alone, the words, "Can't come to tea." When we are doing this we must put every consonant absolutely in front of the teeth, nothing whatever must happen behind them; we must never, for one instant, be conscious of the throat. We are playing at gymnastics of the lips, tip of tongue, and jaw, and our limitation is that we must make every speech effort in front of the teeth. Nothing must take place in the mouth chamber or the throat, or we shall at once hear something akin to vocalising. It is for the shaping and gripping of the consonants that we

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are practising, and for the bringing of the voice well forward under the arch of the upper lip. If we use plenty of breath we shall be able to bring the voice forward, but having got it there, we must keep it there by means of good shaping (learned in the vowel practice) and real muscular activity for which we use these liping exercises. When the children have realised the idea of projecting the above sentence by means of muscular activity, shaping the consonants strongly and directing all action forward, then we can play at a guessing game, for which we must use little phrases with plosive consonants which provide the necessary muscular activity. In practising these phrases, a fresh impulse of breath should be used for each word.

Bright/blue/brooches.

Patches/of pink/poppies.

Two/twisted/trenches.

Dark/dusty/ditches.

Greedy/grasping/gossips.

Black/coated/cats.

If they can guess the words from your "liping," tell them not to say them aloud to you, but to "lip" them back to you, one by one. Next show them how to "lip" them, and then how to speak them aloud, modelling their speaking exactly on their liping exercise, so that they get the advantage of vigorous breathing for the phrase, good forward production, and real muscular activity of lips, tip of tongue and jaw from such practice. Here are some sentences which the seven-year-olds of one of my teacher-students, after she had given them the ones I have quoted, made up to "lip" to their teacher, so that she might guess the words from their "liping" them to her

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Bonny Betty bought a blue bonnet.
Pick a proud poppy, Pansy.
Flip, flap, flip, went the fishes' fins.
Dad, Dora and Dan went to the door.
Ding dong dell.
Tim and Ted went to Teddington.
Lift the latch and light the lamp.
The grapes are growing.
Kill the calf, Kitty!
The black crow said, "Caw, caw."

This should always be the preliminary exercise for consonant practice, as it is invaluable for strong forward articulation, but it is very difficult to describe it in writing. It should be thoroughly understood by every teacher and personally studied before it is given to a class. Remember that it is *not* a whispering exercise. It is a strong shaping of the consonant sounds without any voice. We are accustomed to think, when we are vocalising, that we speak more distinctly than is actually the case, because we are deceived by the loud sound made by the vowels. British people generally have an excess of tone over articulation when they speak, and it is to achieve perfect balance between tone and articulation, or vowels and consonants, that we practise the "lipping" exercise.

The Introduction to Consonants

If we are to make a successful speech game of our consonant practice, we must allow our pupils to make up their own consonant table. To assist them to do this, the teacher requires some knowledge of phonetics as a background, especially if she has to deal with such speech defects as are certain to arise in a large class. We cannot,

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of course, in lessons such as these, use scientific terms, or write phonetic symbols, or make any complete analysis, but everything we give the children should have phonetics as its basis.

First of all we want to discover the difference in duration of sound, so we give to the class several plosives such as P, T and K, and then several fricatives such as F,

Consonant Table

<i>Stops</i>	<i>Run-on Sounds</i>
P. B.	With push of breath
T. D.	heard :
K. G.	F. V.
Ch. J.	Th. Th. (voiced).
	S. Z.
	Sh. Zh. R. (Fricative).
	Without push of breath
	heard :
	L.
	M. N. Ng.
	R. (Rolled)
<i>Sounds like Vowels</i>	<i>All Breath Sound</i>
W. Y.	H.
<i>Letters containing two or more sounds : X—EKS ;</i>	
<i>Q—Kw.</i>	

Th and S, making the contact and release of the plosives as sharp and strong as possible and holding on the fricatives as long as possible. Tell the class not to trouble for the time being as to *where* the sound is being made, as we will discover that later. At present we want to know which can be held on, and which cannot. They will soon tell us, after experimenting for themselves,

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and we find names like "Stopped Sounds" and "Running on Sounds" for the two varieties. Now we go through all the consonant sounds and we find that, roughly speaking (for we cannot go into detail in a lesson such as this), the sounds given on p. 35 in the left-hand column are "stops," while those in the right-hand one are "run-on sounds." There still remain W, Y, Q, X and H, for which we have to find names apart from these. I give on page 35 in every case the names which my nine and ten-year-old boys and girls found for the consonants, when I invited them to help me make a table.

I brought to their notice the fact that there were sounds like *Ch*, *Sh*, and *Th*, where, though there were two letters, those letters made a single consonant sound. It will be noticed that I gave them no affricatives except *Ch* (Tsh) and *J* (Dzh) for fear of confusing them, but dealt with these later in the actual speech, without giving them a specific title. Such sounds, therefore as *ts*, *dz*, *tr*, *dr*, *tth* and *dth* are not in this table.

Sounds

Having gone so far, we proceeded to speak first the stops and then the run-on sounds in pairs, asking the children what fresh discovery they could make, still telling them not to trouble for the moment as to *where* the sound was made, but to put their hands at the sides of the throat when experimenting. I at once got the answer that some were all breath while others had voice in them. We therefore agreed to put "Breathed" when describing such sounds as *P* and *F*, "Voiced" when describing sounds like *B* and *V*. I then invited them to examine the sounds which we had found were in pairs, and to tell me where they were made in the mouth.

LESSON 6

Consonants II

HERE comes the absolute necessity for having a tiny mirror for each member of the class, so that the children may be able to see as well as to hear and to feel where the sounds are made, for all these senses must work together and aid in the formation of accurate and vigorous consonants. One of my teacher-students has told me that she managed to collect no less than fifty-eight mirrors for her class of seven-year-olds from advertisement sources, and that the interest aroused in the speech training lesson, and the value received, has been quite doubled since this was done.

If we take with the children only one or two consonants at a time, asking them to look in the mirror, and also, where necessary, to feel the position by putting the fingers in the mouth, and then to tell us where the sound is made, the game will go forward with real concentration, interest and amusement. Our class will never realise the hard work that is being required of it—for consonant practice *is* very hard work if it is well done. Let us tell the children as little as possible; let them be making discoveries all the time for themselves, a process which will keep them keen and eager. Never keep them too long at any sound, and never give more than one or two at a time, but see to it that, while they are practising,

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they are putting all their mental and physical energy into the work. They will return to their discoveries with fresh zest at each lesson if they are never pushed to the point of fatigue or boredom. Let us remember that this is a speech game and should always be regarded as such by the children. It may always be linked up with their rhymes, jingles and folk ballad refrains, and so have an added association of delight.

Practical Classification

To make a long story short, when the children and I had worked right through the sounds—a process which, of course, spread itself over many lessons—we found we had made this rough and ready but practical classification for our own benefit.

Stops

- P. Breathed lip sound.
- B. Voiced lip sound.
- T. Breathed, point of tongue and upper gum sound.
- D. Voiced, point of tongue and upper gum sound.
- K. Breathed, tongue and palate sound.
- G. Voiced, tongue and palate sound.
- Ch. Breathed, front of tongue and front of palate.
- Tip of tongue held against inner edge of teeth.
- J. Voiced, front of tongue and front of palate. Tip of tongue held against inner edge of teeth.

Run-on Sounds

- F. Breathed, upper teeth and lower lip.
- V. Voiced, upper teeth and lower lip.
- Th. Breathed, tip of tongue between teeth.
- Th. Voiced, tip of tongue between teeth.
- S. Breathed, front part of tongue and upper gum.

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Z. Voiced, front part of tongue and upper gum.

Sh. Breathed, front part of tongue and front of palate.

Tip of tongue turned slightly back.

Zh. Voiced, front part of tongue and front of palate.

Tip of tongue turned slightly back.

L. Voiced, tip of tongue and front of palate. Air passes over sides of tongue.

M. Voiced, lips held together while soft palate lowered and sound sent into nose.

N. Voiced, tip of tongue against upper gum while soft palate lowered and sound sent into nose.

Ng. Voiced, back of tongue against back of palate while soft palate lowered and sound sent into nose.

R. Sometimes voiced, sometimes breathed, turned up tip of tongue taps or rubs against front of palate.

W. Begins with *oo*, ends with *ŭ*.

Y. Begins with *ee*, ends with *ŭ*.

H. A puff of breath.

The table having been made, we were now ready to take a couple of consonants at a time and discover among ourselves the best way in which to practise them, so that they might be spoken with perfect distinctness and yet with no hint of artificiality.

The Practice of Consonants

We hear much about the necessity for clean attack in instrumental and vocal music, but it seldom occurs to us to think of the need for it in speech, yet it is just this lack of clean attack and finish in consonant work that is largely responsible for the mumbling utterance so prevalent among us all. Our children must be taught to attack their initial consonants (and it is wise to begin with the "stops") as if they were striking wooden

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hammers on the metal strips of the little boards, which we call dulcimers, and give for presents at Christmas. These initial sounds they can also practise as if they were throwing little darts straight into a bull's-eye on the opposite wall. This is the first stage in our practice game and we have to teach our pupils to join the initial consonant cleanly and firmly to the rest of the word, so that there is no danger of our having an extra sound between consonant and vowel ; thus, *phay* for " pay," a common occurrence where feeble utterance is the rule. Contact must in every case be neatly and strongly made and the release must be as clean and neat.

Necessity for Accuracy

If the children work at these initial plosives as if they were striking hammers on bell notes, and we remind them that they must come down with perfect accuracy and the right kind of strength on the note, they will get at the idea we want. I often show them the difference at this point between a five-finger exercise neatly and cleanly played and one in which all the notes are slurred and feebly struck, and they then realise what is meant by the attack on the word. Remember that the attack must never be overdone ; it must just be absolutely precise and firm. It is a good thing also to tell them that the initial consonant is like the strong hook upon which we hang the rest of the word, and that when there is a sounded consonant at the end also, it is as if we hung our word-material between two strong hooks.

Practise for attack on the vowels *ay*, *ee*, *i*, *oh*, *oo*, putting the consonant in each case before the vowel, thus : *pay-pee-pi-poh-poo*, reminding the pupils that they must send the sound of the vowel forward to the arch of the

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upper lip and project the syllable by means of the consonant. Let them attack each sound strongly but lightly (agility and precision are what we want in consonant work), taking a little breath between each sound, so that there may always be enough breath to send the sound well forward in front of the teeth and make good tone. Vary the vowels used thus :—

oo-ah-aw-ay-ee ; or *u-oy-ow-aw-ay*, etc., putting the required consonant in every case before the vowel sound. We cannot, of course, use the short or relaxed vowels until we practise them with final consonants, because they do not provide us with sufficient sustaining power.

The next exercise must be concerned with final consonants, placing them in every case now at the end of the vowel sounds, thus :—

ayp-ee-ipe-ohp-oo

oop-ahp-owp-ayp-ee

oop-oyp-owp-awp-ahp

and so on, with each consonant. Before we can do this really well, however, we must study the best way of speaking our finals.

The Happy Mean

Every teacher knows that there are two extremes here which have to be avoided with equal care : that of over-weighting the final consonant so that we hear “ sob-uh ” for “ sob,” making an extra syllable so that the word often sounds like another one, i.e., “ sobber ” ; or that of so feebly articulating that the final B hardly ever comes to our ears at all, and we are left in doubt as to whether the word spoken is intended for “ sob ” or “ sot ” or “ sod.” I speak particularly of the final consonant of a word at the end of a phrase, where it naturally has most

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force. We know that the force varies when it is attached to a word within the phrase, according to the sound by which it is followed.

Our business then is to find the happy mean, so that we may make our words perfectly intelligible without being over articulated and artificialised in utterance—for this means good speech where consonants are concerned. The best device I have found for practice of the “stops” is the following. Say the word “rip” four times strongly against the upper part of the forefinger, held about two inches from the lips, and you will find that, roughly speaking, the puff of breath at the end of the word is dispersed over most of the surface between the two first joints. Now go from “rip” (said four times) to “rib” (said four times) and you will discover that the puff of breath for B is now a light, but concentrated blow, directed to the first joint only.

Take next *T* and *D*, and you will find if you go from “lit” to “lid” that the puff of breath at the end of “lit,” though it seems to cover practically the same amount of surface as that of P, has not anything like the force of breath of the latter. When we come to “lid” we find that at the two-inch distance we can hardly feel anything at all. We therefore bring the forefinger to a one-inch distance before the lips, so that we can feel the little blow of D, which though much lighter than that of T (indeed little more than a warming of the fingers) is now quite distinguishable in practically the same place as that of the latter.

Go now to *K* and *G*. You will find at once on speaking first “lack” then “lag” that to feel the blow we have here also to bring the forefinger quite near the lips. We find we are now blowing in a downward direction against

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the lowest joint of the finger, and that the force is pretty much the same in K as in T, while in G as in D, even when we hold the forefinger quite near, we feel little more than a warming of the joint. If we ourselves can make the sounds accurately, it is a good thing to take the forefinger or hand of a pupil and blow against it to show them the amount necessary to make the sound clear in speech. This exercise can also be practised against the palm of the hand and against the upturned wrist. Sometimes one way will be found more helpful than another, so it is well to have alternative methods.

In *Ch* and *ǰ* we find also that we have the puff of breath against the lowest joint, the difference between the two being the same as between the other voiced and unvoiced "stops." Here the force is quite strong, because the sounds are really "*Tsh*" and "*Dzh*," so that we have here both the plosive and fricative power joined in the making of them.

In practising fricatives (*F.V. Th. Th.* (voiced) *S.Z. Sh. Zh.*) we can combine with our consonant practice two excellent breathing exercises; one for vigour and flexibility and one for sustaining power.

Reminding our pupils of their position and method for breathing, we can ask them to sustain in full force the F and then the V, while we count a steady "1, 2, 3, 4, 5." Now ask them to go from F to V with full force, rapidly taking in breath and sending it out vigorously between each sound. Treat in the same way *Th* and *Th* (voiced), *S* and *Z*, *Sh* and *Zh*. There can be no better exercise for vigorous breathing and robust articulation. We must, of course, carry on also our regular exercises, combining the initial and final fricatives with the various vowels, as we did in connection with the "stops."

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We have already dealt with *M*, *N*, and *NG* in our Nasal Resonance, so we now pass to *L*. This sound is very badly spoken in nearly all positions, the reason being that its impact is so light that in some positions the child hardly ever hears it spoken by its elders. We constantly hear from old and young something like "be-uhs" for "bells" and "hoad" for "hold" and "heh-up" for "help," showing that contact has been missed entirely and a vowel has taken the place of *L*, the tongue having never been lifted to the palate but allowed to lie supinely in the mouth. To help our pupils to be fully conscious of the contact needed, we must practise with them such sounds as "lay-lee-lie-loh-loo," and then :

"ale-eel-ile-ohl-ool"

bidding them feel with the fingers the raising of the tip of the tongue to the front of the palate, and also showing them that if they look in the mirror while making *L* it is the underpart of the tongue which should confront them. In the above exercise they must make the neatest possible contact and release at every sound, and be fully conscious of the position by seeing, hearing and feeling. When practising the final *L* before *S* (which sounds *Z*) and before the other consonants, the pupil must hold on the *L* part of the word and then swiftly and strongly add the consonant in question, thus,

ale . . . z hol . . . d sel . . . f.

This exercise may be preceded by one of holding on the *L* sound, as long as breathing permits a good volume of sound and firm contact. Another helpful exercise for final *L* and for *L* before a final consonant is that of speaking the sound "ah" and then the consonant *L*, watching the position of the tongue in a mirror

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meanwhile. The child should hold each sound for a second or two, when he will observe that flat position of the whole tongue in "Ah" and then the raised tip and turned up body of the tongue in L. Follow this with all the long simple vowels in succession and then add to L the various final consonants, allowing the pupil to realise each sound position as he makes it.

Defective *R* sounds are becoming increasingly common, the reason being that we no longer speak the *R* with any force in England. What our children do not hear they cannot imitate. We should give the children the full value at least of the frictional *r* coming after such consonants as *p, t, f, th, sh*. Such an exercise as :

Pray-pree-pry-proh-proo.

Tray-tree-try-troh-troo.

Kray-kree-kry-kroh-kroo.

Fray-free-fry-froh-froo.

Thray-three-thry-throh-throo.

Shray-shree-shry-shroh-shroo.

is useful when we stress the rub of the turned-up tongue-tip against the palate in each sound. In the case of practising with *B, D, G* and *V*, we should endeavour to obtain a vibrated "*r*." Pupils should also be helped to sound the *r* and be conscious of its slight vibration in such words as "wherever" and "moreover."

Miss Ida Ward, in her book "Speech Defects,"* suggests various remedies for the defective or non-existent *r*. In all cases the pupils must be made fully conscious of the contact and right position of the sound.

In *W* and *Y*, which are equal respectively to oo-*ü* and ee-*ü*, it is the first element which is so often feebly spoken.

* Published by J. M. Dent.

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It must be remembered that in these combinations *oo* and *ee* are given much more firmness than they have when we meet them as ordinary vowels; "*oo*" here has much more lip sounding and "*ee*" has real consonant contact, made by the strong pressure of the front part of the tongue against the palate. We must help our pupils to realise that they must practise as follows:—

oo-ed (for wed); *oo*-ild (for wild); *oo*-et (for wet); *oo*-ether (for weather); holding on the "*oo*" and then speaking the rest of the word quickly and strongly, as if tacking it neatly on. The same applies to the *ee* sound in "*y*" *ee*-ell (for yell).

The *ee*-outh *ee*-ielded to the *ee*-oman.

The youth yielded to the yeoman.

Difficulties of H

The initial "*H*" presents many difficulties to the teacher in or near London, where it is so constantly dropped. A very good way of helping our pupils to realise that it is a puff of breath is to ask them to whisper strongly against the palm of the hand, "*hay-hee-hi-hoh-hoo*" and then "*hi-hoi-how-haw-hah*," noticing where the sound is weakest and where strongest, but always observing that there is a blow against the palm. Next they should practise, in the same way, adding any final consonant, thus: "*hayt, heet, hite, hoht, hoot*," etc. After this they may voice the syllables but should much exaggerate the blow of "*h*" against the palm, until they become conscious of the nature of the sound.

When we come to deal with the artistic side of speech, we endeavour to practise all these sounds in our jingles, refrains and nonsense poems so that the child may receive constant practice in saying them correctly.

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Combinations of Consonants

When one word in a phrase or sentence ends with a consonant and the next word to it begins with the same consonant, or one of a similar sound, care must be taken not to run the two words together. We must always render ourselves intelligible, but must do it without over-emphasis. I heard once at a festival the following two lines of Hood's "Ruth," given thus by about thirty competitors :—

"She stood breast high amid the corn,
Clas' by the golden light of morn."

The friend beside me who did not know the poem could not make any meaning at all out of the line, which should have been :

"Clasped by the golden light of morn."

So often in the beautiful last stanza of Walter de la Mare's "Tartary" we are given a jumble of words such as this :

"Her trembling lakes, her foamle' seas,
Her bir' delighting citron trees,"

instead of :

"Her trembling lakes, her foamless seas,
Her bird-delighting citron trees."

Here is one line in the Hippolytus which is constantly spoken thus :

"Where the wool shall know thee no more,"
which should be, of course :

"Where the wolves shall know thee no more."

Such combinations as these are constantly occurring, and therefore we must teach our pupils to make the

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neatest and most delicate release of the speech organs between one sound and another. I have found that the best device in such cases is that of making two imaginary heaps, a little apart, and of placing the first word on one heap and the next on the other, thus :

bird delighting
 ()

Now go from one to the other, speaking each word with light precision—first quite slowly, then gradually speeding up, until we can fit the words into the rhythmic pace of the poetic line without disturbing it, and yet give the words their value in speech. Be careful above all things to avoid making an extra syllable to the first word, thus : “birduh-delighting” or “foam-lessuh seas.” A golden rule when practising such difficult combinations is, “Take care of the first word ; finish *it* carefully and the one following will take care of itself.” “Clasped by” and “wolves shall” are very difficult because the words “clasped” and “wolves,” even when by themselves, are hardly ever given their consonant values. The pupils in the first case must realise fully the three elements in the word, thus :—clas-p-t (for the sound at the end is really *t*, not *d*) and so make three imaginary heaps, thus :

clas p t
 ()

dealing with them as described before. When the sounding of the three elements has been speeded up to the point where the word is precisely and yet quite quickly pronounced, we can make out two heaps again and say clasped by, until this combination is also achieved delicately and speedily, but with perfect neatness and precision. In the same way we have to separate “wolves”

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into wol v z voicing each element strongly at whatever pace we speak them, finishing with wolves shall.

The pupils should play with these imaginary heaps, placing each element or word with the hand upon each heap, lightly and firmly, and passing with the hand from heap to heap, making quicker hand movements as the pace increases. This is an exercise almost impossible to describe on paper, but seen and heard, it is at once understood. One of its chief merits is that the pupils delight in the fun, and will practise it therefore with unwearied concentration and benefit to themselves.

Further Consonant Practice

Let me add two more suggestions for consonant practice, first connected with syllables and second with phrases.*

pee páy pee
pie páy pie
poh páy poh
poo páy poo
paw páy paw
pah páy pah
pew páy pew
poy páy poy
pow páy pow

To be used with all consonants and combined with other consonants, as shown in previous exercises, thus :

pree práy pree

or

glee gláy glee

* First exercise suggested by Miss Crowther, Melbourne, Australia, second exercise by Miss Ward, University College Phonetics Department.

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This exercise is for speed with accuracy and should be practised in perfect rhythm, the accent being upon the centre syllable. Repeat four times or six times as rapidly as possible, but never let rapidity be at the expense of accuracy and vigour.

Another is to combine syllables in many ways, thus :

ta-da, ta-da, ta-da, ta-da, ta-da, ta-da,
da-ta, da-ta, etc.
ta-da-da, etc.
da-ta-ta, etc.

Take each combination six times, with rapidity and perfect accuracy, beginning fairly slowly and gradually speeding up. Pairs of consonants should be taken to begin with and then various combinations can be used, such as fa-tha, sha-sa, pa-ka, ma-na, etc.

The following are phrases for the practice of consonants which present special difficulties, apart from those to which I have already alluded.

Final B (with s).

A rub through the scrub.
Robes for the babes.

Final P (with s).

A leap from the poop.
Lamps by the fir clumps.

(Take care here that the *m* is fully nasalized before the final *ps*.)

Final T (with s).

He lifts them from the rafts.
Hosts of priests in the mists.

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(The *t* tends nearly always to be left out here. Practise as above :

mis ts etc.)

Ts should be practiced separately before use in this combination. In sounding it we make the contact for "t," but when we release it we do so very slowly, and instead of making a kind of vowel sound like "ü" or "i" as we do when sounding "t" in the usual way, we make the sound of "s."

Final D (with n and s).

A band on the road.

Bands on the grand stand.

(Practice for nasal sound before D.)

Initial and Final F.

Five fine furry foxes (flying fleetly).

A loaf on the shelf—for myself.

(Practice for L before F.)

Final V (with z).

Loaves on the shelves—for themselves.

Leaves on the graves of the braves.

Initial and Final Th (breathed).

Threading through the thick thistles.

A path—through the heath.

Breaths from the heaths.

Initial and Final Th (voiced).

The spray of the waves came into the bay.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done!

Wreathe smoke! seethe bubbles!

(If the pupils, in making the voiced *th* and the breathed *th*, are taught to touch, with the tip of the tongue, the

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forefinger set lightly against the lips, the tendency to say "'E spray of 'e waves came into 'e bay," and "'Y kingdom come, 'y will be done," will be corrected.)

Initial and Final L (with final consonants).

Little by little.

Low lying levels in lingering light.

A rill from the hill.

A bell in the dell.

Rills from the hills.

Bells in the dells.

Gold in the old mould.

A bill from the sulky milkman.

Initial and Final M.

Many merry milkmaids.

In the gloom of the limes.

Initial and Final N.

Nine nice new nails.

A green lane in the sunshine.

Ng (before th).

The strength in the length of the rope.

(Note that in final nasals the contact must be held for a second, while the sound is kept on through the nose, otherwise we hear an extra syllable, thus: "gloom-uh," "lane-uh," etc.)

H.

Huge high hoary hills.

How he hews the hawthorn.

APPENDIX

Senior Work

I should like to add a short note (with exercises) upon Speed with Accuracy, and upon what I call Projection of Tone.

Speed with Accuracy

Have you ever thought about the difficulty involved in this matter? The old-fashioned Platform Speaker and Reciter often amused us, when he did not embarrass us, by enunciating his words with such care as to render what he said quite unnatural to our ears. If we had thought about it, however, we should have realized that this ponderousness came mainly from the fact that he was quite unable to combine pace and lightness of attack with accuracy. All our Consonant Exercises must aim at the lightness and agility in moving from one speech position to another, which constitutes so large a part of good enunciation. Take one of Browning's "Cavalier Tunes," obviously written to the rhythm of a gallop—"Boot! Saddle!" for instance. Let me quote one verse with the method attached:

Bóot! sáddle! to hórse and awáy!
Réscue any cástle befóre the hot dáy
Bríghtens to blúe from its sílvery gráy,
Bóot! sáddle! to hórse and awáy!

To begin with, the rhythm must be perfectly main-

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tained, each stress (') must be marked by a definite little tug of the reins as the speaker sets an imaginary horse galloping (the line being *spoken* at the gallop). Ample breath should be taken to begin with, then a quick renewal of breath should be taken at the end of each line, because we repeat each line three times, aiming at pace with perfect accuracy. Do not be afraid of hammering out the words as long as the voice is kept well forward.

The second exercise upon this verse is as follows :— Take ample breath at the very beginning, thereafter take a quick but ample renewal at the end of each line, and go through the verse, line by line, in this fashion.

The third exercise consists in combining pace, accuracy, and the sustaining of the breath. Attempt to speak two lines with one breath, and lastly three lines, taking fresh breath only for the refrain. Treat all the verses thus.

Another suitable poem for this purpose is that of "Kentish Sir Byng"—which may be treated in exactly the same manner, and which makes also an excellent "lipping" exercise for the Seniors, as it is full of plosive consonants. The method for "lipping" is to "lip" a line and speak a line alternately.

Projection Exercise

Mindful of the way in which the coalman uses his hands as a trumpet when he is calling his wares, and as to our own instinctive use of a "hand-made" megaphone when we are calling to someone at a distance, we can practise such exercises as we used for mouth chamber resonance, according to this method.

Let us take one sentence in illustration,
"Go to the stony road!"
and practise thus :

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Breathe deeply and plentifully—throw the breath-material well forward into the very front of the mouth, make a funnel or trumpet of the lips, in order that the sound may be caught, shaped and conducted; then, placing the hands on either side of the lips, making an extra trumpet with them, project the words, trying to imagine you are speaking down a very long corridor, or along a road to someone at a distance. In this exercise you must never pull on the throat—you must never know that you *have* a throat. All the power must come from the amount of breath material, the amplifying of the material by the resonators, and the gripping and shaping of the material at the front of the mouth by the muscular activity of the speech organs. The vowels must be well shaped and the consonants must grip them and project them. None of the sounds must be allowed to fall back into the mouth chamber behind the teeth. We ought to be able to call to a great distance with perfect ease and an effect of melody as well as power and distinctness. Every word must be heard in its entirety. An excess of vowels over consonants must not be tolerated.

Practise also in this way such lines as

“Blow ! Bugles ! Blow !”

“Blow ! Blow ! thou winter wind !”

“Hi over ! Hi over ! You man at the ferry !”

“Hillo ! Ho ! Hi ! Ho ! Hillo !”

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